DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 731 PS 030 346

AUTHOR Dekovic, Maja
TITLE Discrepancies between Parental and Adolescent Developmental Expectations.
PUB DATE 2002-04-00
NOTE 56p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence (9th, New Orleans, LA April 11-14, 2002).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); Adolescent Attitudes; *Adolescent Development; *Adolescents; Age Differences; Attachment Behavior; Behavior Problems; Developmental Stages; *Developmental Tasks; *Expectation; Foreign Countries; Interpersonal Competence; Models; Parent Attitudes; Parent Child Relationship; *Parents; Personal Autonomy; Sex Differences; Social Adjustment; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Externalization; Internalization; Netherlands; Relationship Quality

ABSTRACT

Guided by a conceptual model linking discrepancies between parent and adolescent developmental expectations and adolescent adjustment and the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship, this study examined adolescent and parent beliefs about the age at which specific competencies should appear. Developmental timetables were grouped into personal tasks (accepting body changes, acquiring personal autonomy, finding reference values), relationship tasks (having a steady group of friends, being involved in a sexual relationship), and socio-institutional tasks (completing school, preparing for integration into work setting). Participating in the study were 508 Dutch families with adolescents from 12 to 18 years of age. Findings indicated that there was little agreement between adolescents' and parents' expectations, with adolescents consistently indicating earlier ages for the achievement of developmental tasks than both their parents. The greatest discrepancies appeared in early adolescence, with views of parents and adolescents gradually converging as adolescents became older. The highest levels of problem behavior were reported by adolescents who had earlier timetables than their parents. Presence of discrepancies predicted moderate disruption in the mother-adolescent relationship. The pattern of results was stronger for mothers than for fathers. (Includes copies of 21 PowerPoint overheads used during the presentation.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 464 731

Discrepancies Between Parental and Adolescent Developmental Expectations

Maja Deković[1]

Paper presented at the Ninth Biennial Meeting of Society for Research on Adolescence, April 11-14, 2002, New Orleans, Louisiana. Symposium: Parents' Beliefs and Expectations About Adolescence: How and When do They Matter?

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Maja Deković
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

[1] Full Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Amsterdam, Wibautstraat 4, 1091 GM Amsterdam, The Netherlands (e-mail: dekovic@educ.uva.nl). Received Ph.D. in 1991 from University of Nijmegen. Research interests: adolescent social development and family relationships during adolescence.

RUNNING HEAD: Parental and Adolescent Expectations

PS 030346

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

[Slide 2] The focus of the present paper is on a specific type of beliefs regarding adolescence: beliefs about the age at which specific competencies should appear (also called "developmental timetables"). Parents' developmental timetables have been shown to be important at earlier ages, and they could be particularly important during adolescence, due to rapid developmental changes that characterize this period of development. Although there is a general societal agreement regarding developmental tasks in adolescence (becoming emotionally independent, finishing education, establishing an intimate relationship, setting up an independent life, etc.), there are few consistent guidelines regarding the appropriate timing of achievement in these tasks. In the absence of such guidelines, each family must handle this issue in its own way.

These age related expectations are important for several reasons. First, they reveal parents' and adolescents' developmental theories and provide insight into the ways parents and adolescents view adolescent development and behavior. Second, they reflect the values which are considered to be important within different cultures. Third, they possibly function as a basis upon which parents evaluate and respond to children's behavior. Parents often hold well-differentiated expectancies about the course of development during the transition from childhood to adolescence and make specific inferences about the implications of these changes for individual functioning (Collins).

[Slide 3] The studies we have undertaken to examine these developmental expectations are based on the conceptual model proposing that interactions between the parents and the child are mediated by cognitive processes associated with expectations about the behavior of the other person. It was hypothesized that several characteristics of both adolescent (age, the degree of pubertal development, gender, temperament - impulsivity) and parent (gender, years of experience as a parent, sense of competence regarding own parental role) determine the developmental expectations. This part of the model deals, thus, with determinants of developmental expectations. It is indicated with dotted lines because I won't be talking about it today. These findings have already been published. We showed that personal characteristics of adolescents, such as pubertal development and temperament (impulse-control) affect developmental timetables (Deković, Noom, & Meeus, 1997). We also found that developmental expectations differ as a function of

cultural background in a study that compared these expectations in a Dutch and a Japanese sample (Deković et al, in press).

Today I'll focus on the right part of the model: consequences. These developmental expectations are supposed to have consequences for both adolescent adjustment and the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. In addition, we expected that the degree to which adolescent and parent differ in their expectation would be even more important for both types of outcome. In this period when a new set of behaviors clearly emerges, views of parents and children regarding the age-appropriate behavior are expected to be discrepant. These differences in opinion between adolescents and their parents may create the potential for serious conflict

[Slide 4] The first step to test this model included the development of adequate instruments to assess developmental expectations. Most of the research on developmental timetables has focused on infancy and early childhood. For these developmental periods there are several standardized instruments available to assess knowledge of norms and milestones as well as expectations regarding the mastery of a variety of infants' or children's behaviors and achievements. Only a few attempts have been made to assess the expectations held by parents of older children (Rosenthal and Bornholt, Feldman and Quatman, Collins). When examining the content of the items used in these studies, however, it appears that some domains are covered well (for example, independent behavior in everyday situations), but others, equally relevant for adolescents (for example, coping with physical changes, involvement in intimate relationships, etc.) are not. Therefore, we tried to develop a new instrument that would have a clearer conceptual basis for item construction and would cover a broader range of specific developmental tasks faced by adolescents during this period.

Instrument:

First, several specific developmental tasks during adolescence were defined and grouped into personal tasks, relational tasks and socio-institutional tasks. The initial item pool was derived from the previous work on developmental timetables during adolescence and was enhanced by additional items tapping tasks not included in the previous studies. Based on the adolescents' and parents' responses to the items in the pilot study, slight

modifications were made in the formulation of several items. The final version of Developmental Timetables for Adolescence (DTA) consists of 26 items covering the following developmental tasks: 1. Personal tasks: accepting one's body changes, acquiring autonomy with regard to decisions one has to take, coping successfully with everyday life situations, finding reference values (Staying home alone when parents are away for a weekend, Handling own money); 2. Relational tasks: (Being involved in a sexual relationship, Having a steady group of friends); and 3. Socio-institutional tasks: successfully completing one's school career, preparing oneself for integration into a work setting (Choosing a profession, Being financially independent, Living on your own).

Adolescents and their parents were asked to decide the age at which the adolescent first engaged or expect to engage in the behaviors described in each item. Each subject was assigned four scores: Overall timetable (mean score on 26 items), and score for Personal (mean score on 16 items), Relational (mean score on 4 items), and Socio-institutional tasks (mean score on 6 items).

FIRST AIM:

[Slide 5] The first aim was to compare the expectations regarding behavior and development during adolescence from parental and adolescent perspectives (at aggregate level). These expectations about developmental processes are supposed to be acquired through both cultural transmission and personal experience. Though the adolescent and his/her parents share the same cultural background, they differ greatly in experience, in their roles and in their perspective. They may therefore be expected to have different views on age appropriate behavior during adolescence.

In addition to generational effects we also examined mother-father differences. We hypothesized that parental gender would influence their timetables, due to mothers' and fathers' different experiences with children and the different quality of the relationships they have with their adolescents. Most mothers spend more time in contact with their adolescents and their relationship appears to be closer and more intimate than the father-adolescent relationship. This may result in greater similarities between timetables of adolescents and their mothers.

Finally, we examined whether parents and adolescents hold similar views of the

sequence in which achievement of developmental tasks should occur.

Sample:

[Slide 6] The data for this study were collected as part of a larger national program of research. The sample consisted of 508 adolescents (254 females and 254 males) and their parents (502 mothers and 467 fathers) from a wide range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Three age groups were represented: early adolescence (between 12 and 13 years old), middle adolescence (between 14 and 15) and late adolescence (between 16 and 18). The data collection took place at the subjects' home, where a battery of questionnaires was administered individually to adolescents, mothers and fathers.

Results:

[Slide 7] Figure 1 presents expected age for the various developmental tasks for adolescents, mothers and fathers. Adolescents consistently indicated earlier ages for the achievement of developmental tasks than both their parents.

Contrary to the prediction, mothers' scores were not more similar than fathers' to the scores of adolescents. Though, in this sample we found that mothers do have more contact with their adolescents and more intimate relationship, this obviously did not affect their developmental timetables.

In order to examine whether parents and adolescents hold similar views of the sequence in which achievement of developmental tasks should occur, rank correlations (Spearman rho) were computed and were highly significant: for both mothers and fathers.

[Slide 8] Comparison at aggregate level showed significant generational effects: Parents and adolescents have different views on what behavior is appropriate at a certain age. Both mothers and fathers expect that adolescents would engage in assessed behavior at later ages than adolescents do.

But, despite the fact that parents expect various transition steps to be taken later in adolescence than their adolescents do, parents and adolescents agree strongly regarding the order in which these steps will be taken (they have strikingly similar views of the sequence in which achievement of developmental tasks should occur).

SECOND AIM

[Slide 9]. Up to now I have been talking about developmental expectations as

individual variables, that is the beliefs about the timing of specific competences assessed separately by adolescent and by parent. Now we turn to dyadic variables, that is, the differences between these expectations within the parent-adolescent dyad.

The next question deals with the adaptiveness (or maladaptiveness) of differences in expectations within the same family. More specifically, we aimed to determine the implication of the discrepancies between parental and adolescent developmental expectations for the adolescent adjustment and for the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship.

Several studies have indicated that discrepancies in parent-child perceptions may be interpreted as signifying difficulties in relationships, may entail different parental responses and may lead to different adolescent outcomes. For example, Holmbeck and O'Donnell (1991) found that discrepancies in adolescents' and mothers' perceptions of who makes decisions in the family predicted the degree of mother-adolescent conflict. Similarly, Papini and Micka (1991) showed that the discrepancy in adolescent-parent perceptions of adolescent pubertal maturity is related to the quality of family relationships during early adolescence. Based on these findings, we hypothesized that greater discrepancies between adolescents' and parents' developmental expectations would be related to poor development outcome and more problems in the parent-adolescent relationship.

- discrepancies

[Slide 10] The question that needs to be addressed first is: how is discrepancy defined? In most of the research, discrepancy is defined as the absolute -value difference score. In the present study we also use this approach. We defined discrepancy as a continuous variable (computed by summing up the absolute difference between adolescent's and parent's scores on each of the 26 items). The use of difference variables is often discouraged since such variables are less reliable. Although "the reliability of difference variables in the context of family is less problematic since family member's reports are typically moderately correlated, which tend to heighten reliability". In addition, when multiple indicators are available (such as here) the reliability of difference variable may be directly examined.

The problem with absolute-value difference is, however, that information about the

direction of difference is lost. Thus, we analyzed also differences between four groups. These four groups were constructed as following: sample of adolescents and sample of parents were dichotomized into high and low scorings respondents based on median of their reference group. Then a two-by-two matrix was derived where adolescents with high/low expectations were crossed with parents who had high/low scores. This resulted in two congruence groups (one in which both adolescent and parent had early expectations and one in which they both had late expectations) and two discrepancy groups (in which one member of the dyad had earlier expectations than the other member of the dyad). Based on the previous work of Holmbeck (among others) we expected that the dyads in which adolescent beliefs that he/she can handle more responsibilities than parents believe, to be especially problematic.

Results:

- descriptive statistics

[Slide 11] Before presenting the findings pertaining to effects of discrepancies, let me just show you some descriptive data. The Figure presents absolute value discrepancy scores for mother-adolescent and father-adolescent dyads for each domain: personal, relational, socio- nstitutional. The discrepancies were equally pronounced in mother-adolescent and father-adolescent dyads. The largest discrepancies were found on relational tasks, following by socio-institutional and personal tasks. The analyses conducted on the item level reveal that the greatest discrepancy between adolescents and their parents exists in the domain of personal relationships of adolescents ("having a boy/girlfriend") and adolescents' unsupervised activities ("staying home alone when parents are away", "spending vacation without parents or other adult").

(Discrepancy scores were only slightly related to individual measures (correlations varied between -.08 for mother-adolescent discrepancy score and adolescent's expectation, to -.16 for father-adolescent discrepancy and adolescent's expectation. In other words, discrepancy exists al all levels of expectations.)

[Slide 12] [Slide 13] It has been suggested that discrepancies between adolescent and parents are especially likely in early adolescence, due to the rapid physical development and cognitive advances at this age. (In order to simplify this presentation, I report results only

for Overall timetable score.) Indeed we found that the disagreements about timing tend to decrease, as the adolescent grows older. In addition we also examine gender differences and found a significant difference but only for mothers: discrepancies between mothers and daughter were lower than between mothers and sons.

- adolescent adjustment

[Slide 14] The main aim was to examine the relationship between discrepancies and adolescent adjustment. Three indicators of adjustment were used. First, the measure of externalizing problems consisted of a 18-items scale which included a range of relatively minor acts, such as truancy or staying out later at night than curfew, as well as more serious deviance, such as beating someone on purpose or intentionally setting fires. The adolescent was asked to indicate how often in the last 12 months he/she committed each act: 0=never, 1=once, 2= two or three times, 3= four to ten times, and 4=more than 10 times.

The instrument to measure internalizing problems consists of 6 items (Kendel & Davies) (e.g., "I often feel sad for no reason").

Finally, to assess social competence we used the well-known Harter's measure:

[Slide 15] We expected that discrepancies would predict developmental outcome. The results of regression analyses indeed showed that discrepancies between adolescent and mother significantly predicted each of the three indicators after the effect of age and gender were controlled for (upper part of Table). In addition we hypothesized that discrepancy as dyadic measure would still account for a significant percentage of variance even after the effects of expectations as individual score are controlled for (lowers part of the Table). This was the case for internalizing problems and for social competence (discrepancy as dyadic measure was an unique predictor, over and above individual scores), but not for externalizing problems. After the effects of individual measures were controlled for, discrepancies did not add to prediction of these problems.

These were results for mothers. In the sample of fathers, we found that discrepancies were a significant predictor (both in the second and in the third step) of social competence, but not of problem behavior.

[Slide 16] When we look at the four groups (two congruence groups in which both adolescent and parents have either early of late expectations; and two incongruence groups)

we see that the incongruence group in which adolescent has earlier expectations than parent (mother) does, is the group that reports the most problem behaviors. The effects found in the regression analyses predicting problem behavior are therefore mostly due to this incongruence group. In the case of social competence, the effects in regression analysis appear to be due to the congruence group: the highest level of social competence is reported by the group in which both adolescent and parent expect that adolescent can handle responsibilities and successfully deal with developmental tasks at early age.

(These are results for mothers. A similar, but less pronounced pattern, was found for fathers as well).

- quality of the parent-adolescent relationship

[Slide 17] Next we examined whether discrepancies in expectations affects the quality of parent-adolescent relationship. Three indicators were used. In order to assess the amount of conflict between adolescents and their parents, parents were asked to indicate how often they quarrel with their son/daughter about 15 issues. Second scale Attachment, consists of 9 items and measures the degree of closeness, intimacy, understanding and trust that the parent experiences in the relationship with the child. And third, Acceptance, defined as parental dissatisfaction with the child's physical, intellectual and emotional characteristics, was measured by a 12-item scale. These scales are from a modified version of the Parental Stress Index Questionnaire.

[Slide 18] The same kind of analysis was used as in predicting developmental outcome. Again, after controlling for age and gender effects, discrepancies predicted all three indicators of the quality of mother-adolescent relationship. In the sample of fathers, however, the discrepancy significantly predicted the amount of conflict, but not attachment and acceptance.

To examine whether discrepancies uniquely predict the quality of the relationship, over and above the effects of individual scores, in the next series of analyses the discrepancy score was entered after individual expectations scores. In the sample of mothers, we see that discrepancy as dyadic measure still adds to prediction of two indicators (attachment and acceptance). This was not the case for the amount of conflict. When entered at the last step, after controlling for the effects of individual measures, discrepancy score was not a

significant predictor in both samples of mother and fathers.

[Slide 19] When four groups are compared, we see that the lowest quality of relationship, as indicated by a lower degree of attachment and acceptance, was found in the discrepancy group where the adolescent expected achievement of developmental tasks at earlier ages than the mother did. In other words, disturbances in the mother-adolescent relationship seem to occur especially in the situations when the mother is unwilling to grand autonomy and responsibility to the adolescent who thinks that he/she is able to handle it.

In the sample of fathers (not shown) no differences between the groups were found for attachment and acceptance. The level of conflict within the father-adolescent relationship was again highest in the group where adolescent expected maturity earlier than the father.

Conclusions:

[Slide 20] Let me conclude. In the present study we examined developmental expectations at two levels: first, at individual level (beliefs of each family member separately) and second, as a dyadic measure (discrepancy in expectations between parents and adolescents).

Regarding the individual level, there are (at least) two issues worth considering. The first issues deals with accuracy of expectations: the degree to which these expectations are realistic. For many of these behaviors, there are no objective standards against which we can compare parents´ and adolescents´ responses, but for some of these behaviors we do have the data. In a recently conducted large survey in the Netherlands involving several thousand Dutch adolescents, information was gathered regarding the age of becoming involved in romantic relationship and having sexual intercourse. It appears that expectations of adolescents in our sample come closer to the mean age as found in national survey that the expectations of parents. It seems therefore that at least regarding these two issues, adolescents have more accurate expectations than the parents do.

Another issue deals with the meaning of early expectations. It is possible to interpret adolescent early expectations in two ways. On the one hand, early timetable may be seen as a sign of maturity and adolescents´ willingness to handle responsibilities. On the other hand, early timetable might indicate overestimation of own competences and premature

dismissal of parental influence. There are some indications in the literature (Feldman et al.) that early expectations (regarding behavioral autonomy) are associated with less than optima outcome. When we compared adolescents who have early, average and late expectations we found some complex and even paradoxical findings. Adolescents who have earlier timetables experience more behavioral problems, than adolescents who have average expectations and those who have later expectations. But we also found that adolescents with later expectations have the lowest confidence in themselves and report the highest level of depressed moods. In other words, adolescents with average expectations, that are possible the most realistic, appear to be the most adjusted group.

Next we looked at developmental expectations at dyadic level (as a relational property: the discrepancies between parents and adolescents). Within-family data indicated very little agreement between parents and adolescents. In the clinical literature, disagreement among the family members has been viewed as signifying stress and dysfunction. But one could also argue that a certain degree of disagreement is developmentally normative. Parents and adolescents have their own unique role in the family system. The task of parents is to protect, maintain and promote safe growth of their children. The task of the adolescent is to seek the new, the expansive. Not surprisingly then, parents have more conservative views and indicate later ages for the achievement of developmental tasks than adolescents.

The discrepancy in expectations appears to be a developmental phenomenon: views of parents and adolescents gradually converge as adolescents become older. The greatest discrepancies were found in early adolescence. A great deal of research has shown that this is a particularly stressful period for both adolescent and parents.

[Slide 21] Although thus, to some degree, discrepancy may be an inevitable feature of the parent-adolescent relationship, our data show that the discrepancies in expectations were linked to indices of both normative (social competence) and deviant development (externalizing and internalizing problems). In addition, the presence of discrepancies in developmental expectations predicted moderate disruption in the mother-adolescent relationship (less intimacy, trust, and mutual acceptance).

As a whole, the results of the present study are consistent with the literature on "goodness-of-fit" between person and environment: problems are likely to occur where

there is a poor fit between persons expectations and expectations of environment. In our case, the problems seem to occur especially in the situations when the mother is unwilling to grand autonomy and responsibility to the adolescent who thinks that he/she is able to handle it.

The pattern of results was stronger for mothers than for fathers, which seems to point out distinctive processes implicated for mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationship. Although the level of disagreement was similar for mother-adolescent and father-adolescent dyads, discrepancy in father-adolescent dyads were less strongly related to adolescent adjustment and to the quality of their relationship. Consistent with previous research, in our sample too we found that fathers spend less time with their adolescents and that their relationship is experienced by adolescents as more distal. Fathers and adolescents are probably then confronted less often with their divergent expectations.

It should be noted that the magnitude of the associations reported was relatively small. This is, of course, to be expected, as all of the outcome measures in this study (problem behavior, competences, quality of parent-adolescent relationship) are assumed to be multidetermined. Externalizing problem behavior for example, is a result of many factors on interpersonal, intrapersonal and societal level. Adolescent and parental beliefs about behavior and development in adolescence and the divergence in their beliefs can be expected to explain only a modest part of it.

Nevertheless, beliefs about adolescence, as social-cognitive aspects of the parental role and the parent-adolescent relationship, appear to be important for both the adolescent and family functioning. The assessment of developmental expectations provide information about issues that constitute the locus of greatest discrepancy in the adolescent's and the parent's beliefs. It can also help identify extreme, unrealistic or distorted expectations held by some of the family members. The latter might be especially important in the light of findings which indicate that parents and adolescents from families in therapy adhere more rigidly to a number of unrealistic beliefs about the adolescence period than do parents and adolescents from nondistressed families.

Questions remain to be answered:

Is divergence itself best conceptualized as a continuous variable or are there important and discrete cut-off point (does any difference between parent and adolescent matter, or do disagreements need to be of certain magnitude in order to constitute divergence?)

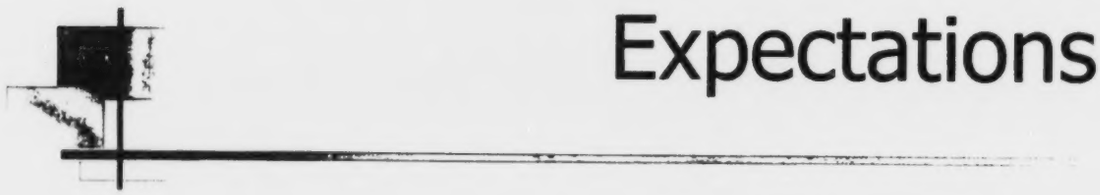
Cultural variations in developmental expectation and in parent-adolescent divergence: incongruent expectation might be especially pronounced in ethnic minority groups. Adolescents whose parents are immigrants face the difficult task of dealing with two cultures that might be fundamentally different in their valuing of independence and autonomy.

Limitations:

All families were Dutch; middle and high classes slightly overrepresented; nonclinical sample, generally well functioning families.

The cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow any conclusion regarding direction of effects. For example, it is unclear whether discrepancy actually leads to lower quality of the relationship or whether the low quality of relationship, arising from other sources, produces divergent expectations.

Discrepancies Between Parental and Adolescent Developmental Expectations

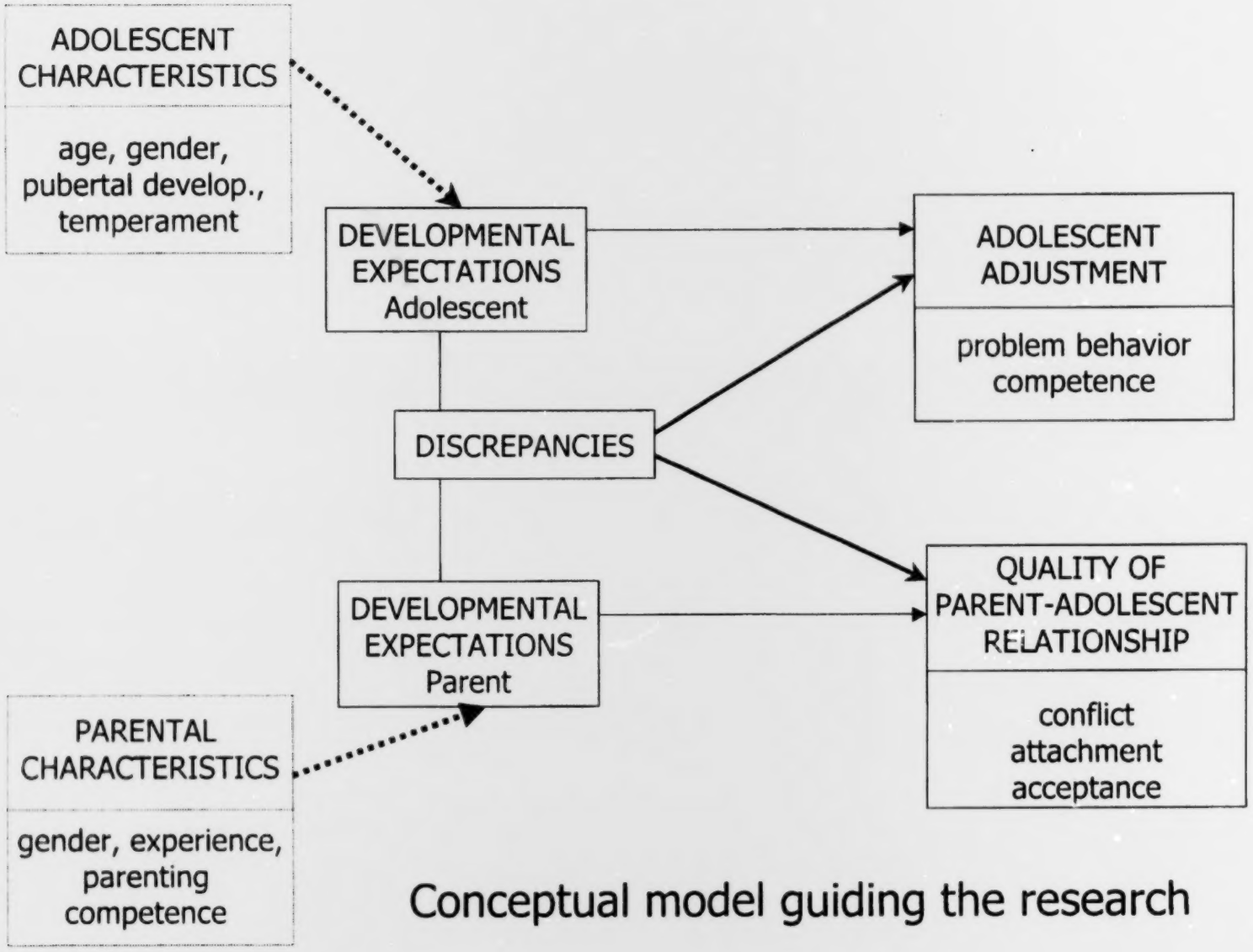


Maja Deković
University of Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Developmental Expectations

- a specific type of beliefs:
  beliefs about the age at which specific competencies should appear

- importance:
  - parents' and adolescents' developmental theories
  - cultural values
  - basis for evaluating adolescents' behavior



Conceptual model guiding the research

Instrument (DTA)

Developmental Timetables for Adolescence (DTA) 26 items:

1. Personal tasks: *Deciding on curfew, Staying home alone when parents are away for a week-end*

2. Relational tasks: *Having a steady group of friends, Being involved in a sexual relationship*

3. Socio-institutional tasks: *Choosing a profession, Being financially independent*

"Indicate the age at which the adolescent first engaged or expect to engage in the behaviors described in each item"[4]

Aim 1
(individual measures)

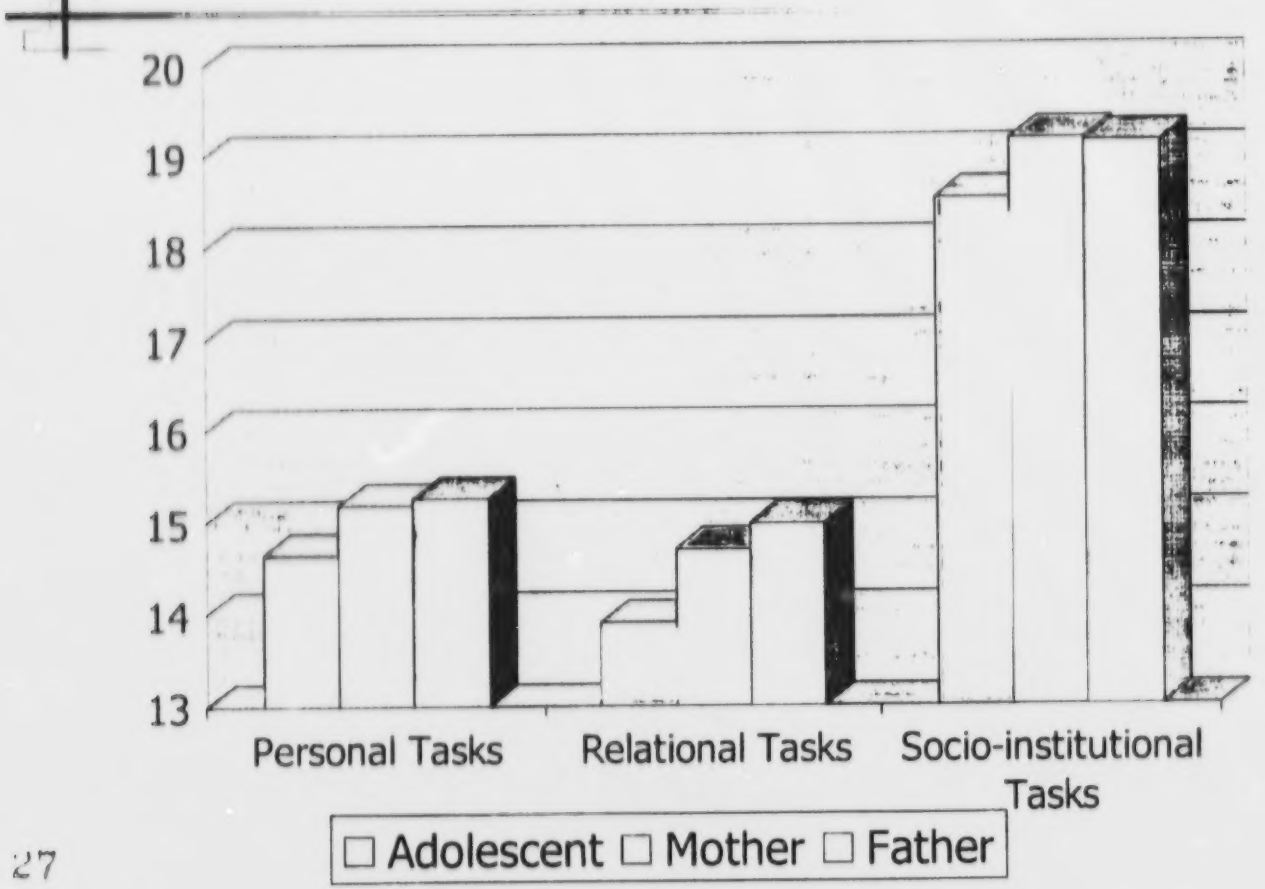
- to compare at aggregate level the expectations regarding behavior and development during adolescence from parental and adolescent perspectives

  - generational effects
  - mother-father differences
  - sequences

Study sample

- 508 families with adolescents
- age: early to late adolescence (12 - 18 years old)
- about 50% boys
- battery of questionnaires during home visit

Mean age of timing of developmental tasks



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Comparison at aggregate level

- significant generational effects:
  adolescents indicate consistently earlier ages
- no differences between mothers and fathers
- sequence highly similar:
  rank correlations .86 and .85

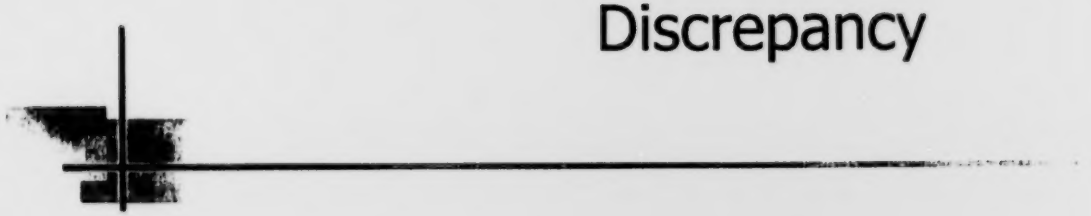
Aim 2
(dyadic measures)

- to determine whether the discrepancy between parental and adolescent developmental expectations affect:

  1/ adolescent adjustment

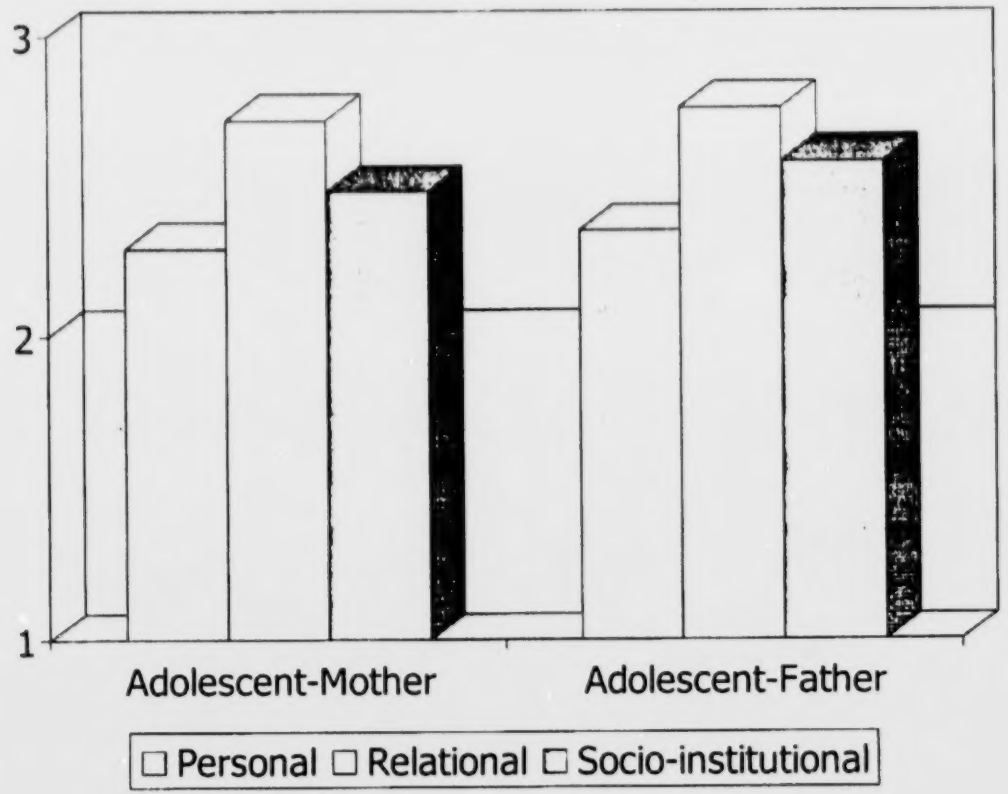
  2/ quality of the parent-adolescent relationship

Discrepancy

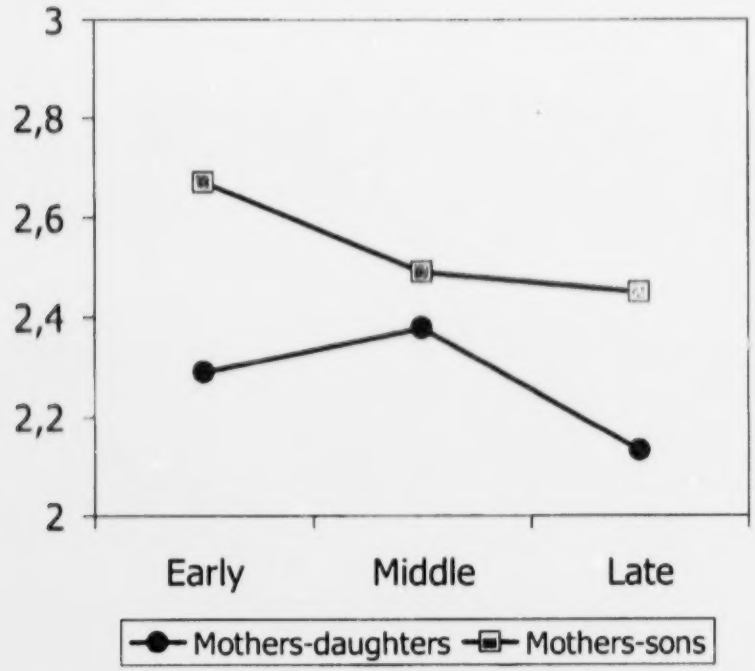


- absolute values (continuous discrepancy score)
- four groups (categories high /low scores):
  - two congruence groups:
    adolescent and parent both either early or late
  - two incongruence groups:
    adolescent early – parent late
    parent early – adolescent late

Discrepancies in developmental expectations

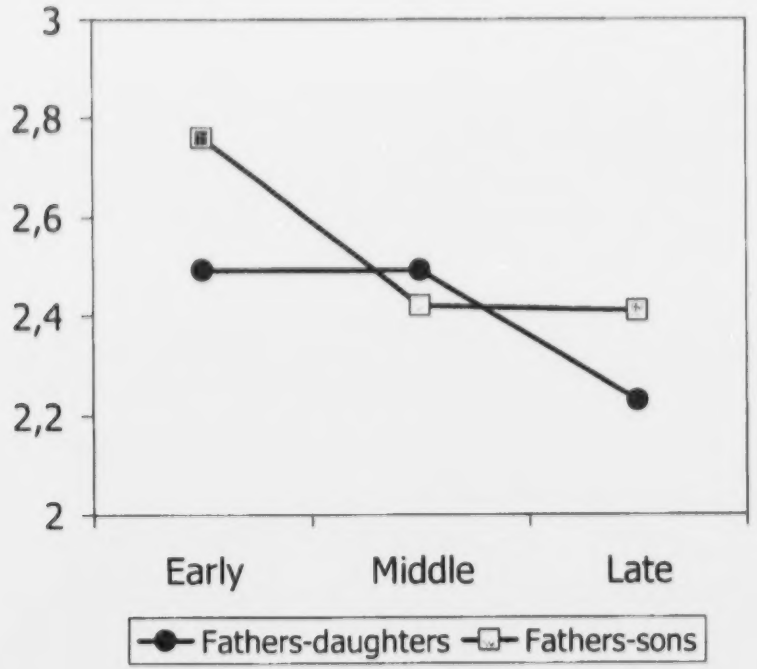


Age and gender differences in adolescent-mother discrepancies



Significant effects:
- age
- gender

Age and gender differences in adolescent-father discrepancies



Significant effects:
age

39

40

Assessment of adolescent adjustment

- Externalizing problems (18 items)

  How often in the past 12 months did you:
  steal something, cheat on a test, etc

- Internalizing problems (6 items)

  I often feel sad for no reason

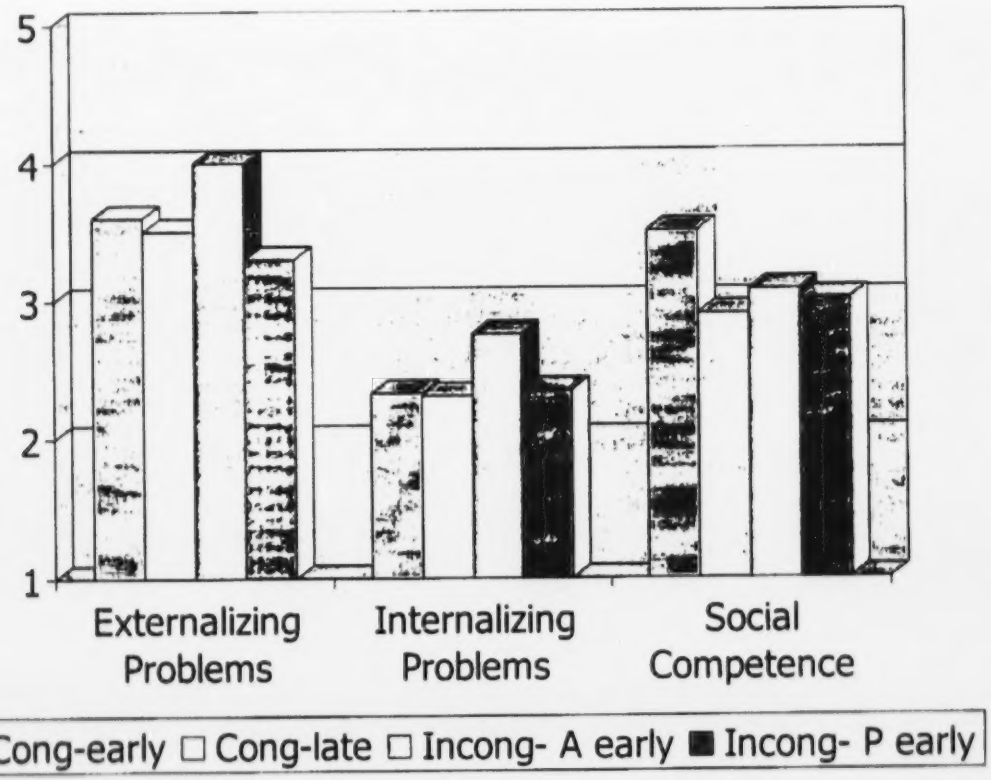
- Social competence (5 items)

  Harter's Self-Perception Profile

Discrepancies and adolescent adjustment

Step/ Predictor	Externalizing Problems		Internalizing Problems		Social Competence	
	Beta	R^2 Change	Beta	R^2 Change	Beta	R^2 Change
1. Controls:		.07***		.04***		.01
Age	.26***		.08		.06	
Gender	-.15**		.22***		-.01	
2. Discrepancy	.09*	.01*	.11*	.01*	-.10*	.01*
2. Expectations:		.04***		.01		.02*
Adolescent	-.20***		.02		-.16**	
Mother	.01		-.07		.07	
3. Discrepancy	.04	.01	.13**	.02**	-.12*	.02*
Total R		.32***		.25**		.19*

Comparison of discrepancy groups: Adolescent adjustment



Assessment of the quality of parent-adolescent relationship

- Conflict (15 items)

  How often do you quarrel with your son/daughter about home chores, friends, etc.

- Attachment (9 items)

  I believe that I do not have a very close relationship with my son/daughter – reverse coded

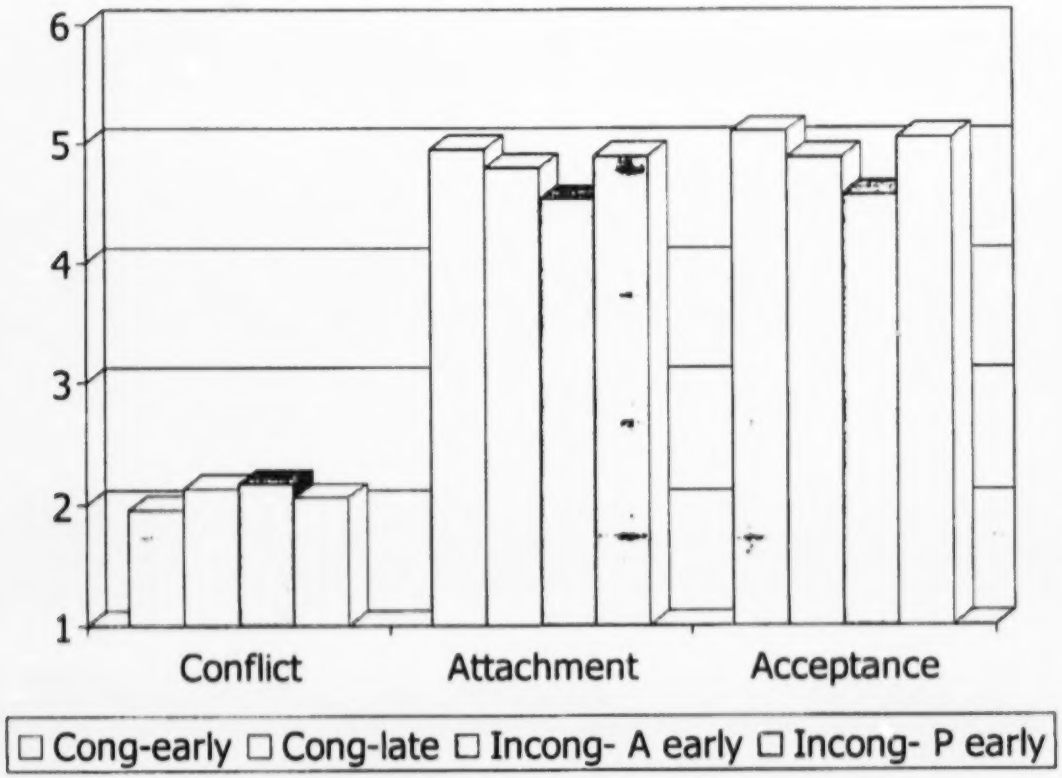
- Acceptance (12 items)

  It is not easy for me to accept my child as he/she is – reverse coded

Discrepancies and parent-adolescent relationship

Step/ Predictor	Conflict		Attachment		Acceptance	
	Beta	R^2 Change	Beta	R^2 Change	Beta	R^2 Change
1. Controls:		.01		.01		.03***
Age	.02		-.03		.02	
Gender	-.01		.09		.13**	
2. Discrepancy	.10*	.01*	-.14**	.02*	-.19***	.04***
2. Expectations:		.02**		.01		.03**
Adolescent	-.01		.02		-.04	
Mother	.14*		-.14**		-.14**	
3. Discrepancy	.07	.01	-.12**	.02**	-.17***	.03***
Total R		.16		.23**		.30***

Comparison of discrepancy groups: Parent-adolescent relationship



Conclusions

- developmental expectations at individual level: accuracy and meaning of early expectations
- little agreement between adolescents' and parents' expectations: adolescents consistently indicated earlier ages for the achievement of developmental tasks than both their parents
- greatest discrepancies in early adolescence: views of parents and adolescents gradually converge as adolescents become older

Conclusions

- discrepancies in expectations associated with adolescent adjustment: the highest level of problem behavior was reported by adolescents who had earlier timetables than their parents.
- presence of discrepancies predicted (moderate) disruption in the mother-adolescent relationship
- pattern of results stronger for mothers than for fathers